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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.



[Price Nine-pence.]

AN

A D D R E S S

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND



[Price: Ninepence]

A N
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
P E O P L E o f E N G L A N D,
ON T H E
M A N N E R S
O F T H E
T I M E S.

L O N D O N :
Printed for the A U T H O R ;
And Sold by J. N E W B E R Y, in St. Paul's Church-
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M D C C L X V I I .

AND
DRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE

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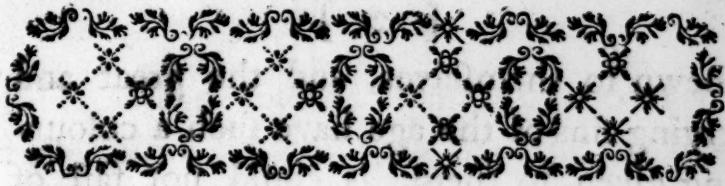
THE
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MDCCLXXII.



A N
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
P E O P L E O F E N G L A N D.

My dear Countrymen and Fellow Subjects,



GIVE me leave, with all the feelings of humanity, to bespeak your attention to what I am going to lay before you.

The present very great profligacy of morals which runs through, and seems in some measure to have infected the whole nation, is matter of melancholy concern, and calls upon all to consider, whilst consideration can be of any avail, how the progress may be stopped, and the direful effects thereof in some degree obviated; and happy would it be for the whole, could all the individuals be so

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shewn to themselves, and the great and crying sins of the age have such a colouring given to them, as could not fail of rousing men out of their lethargy, into a striking sense of the danger they are in, and compel them to labour in good earnest how to escape it; that they may be brought to think before thinking be too late. The honour of God, the interest of religion, and the safety of the publick, demand of every subject his best endeavours for putting an end, as speedily as possible, to that corruption which so universally prevails.

LET us reflect a little upon the evils likely to ensue should this monstrous degeneracy continue longer, and spread further amongst us; the principal sources of which it will be highly proper first to lay open.

THE great, and what I shall in a manner dwell wholly upon as drawing after it all the rest, is the too general neglect of God and religious duties; this is the great spring of all moral depravity. No-
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thing being found, upon an appeal to facts, more evident, than that the not living under a firm persuasion of an all-seeing and most powerful Being, is the root from whence have issued all the mischiefs the world has been plagued with since the time of the first transgression; and it is too notorious, that religion is fallen to such an ebb amongst us, as to have in a great measure with some, and wholly with others, lost its hold of the human mind. It is a grief to say, how shamefully God's service is shunned, and what a slight is put upon his ordinances! How faintly men think of his promises, and how boldly they defy his threatnings!

It may not be amiss to give, by way of introduction to what will follow, a short sketch of the condition of mankind, both out of society and in it, uninfluenced by any sense of a superior Being, noticing their actions, with a view of putting a lasting distinction betwixt them: by which may clearly be perceived, the great efficacy of religion in conducting the affairs of this world, and how much

of mens safety and commodious way of living is absolutely owing to it.

WITHOUT the belief of a God impressing the mind, and directing its operations, there would scarce be any living at all; man would turn out a greater savage than the ravenous beasts, in that he could come at his prey more ways than they. The powers of thought and invention (which, rightly applied, are his distinguishing glory) shew how much, and by what means, he may benefit himself from injuring his fellow-creatures; and the present tendency of his frame, if not checked by some higher counteracting principle, will carry him precipitately to it; make him use all his efforts to reduce the number, and abate the pungency of his wants, and to put in practice every method for enlarging and heightening his satisfactions. From one man's peculiarity of circumstance, or through his greater dexterity in the arts of dissimulation and cozenage, arise various ways, by which he may erect his own fortune upon the distress he shall bring others into; and predo-

predominancy of appetite would give such an impulse to his powers of acting as could scarce be resisted ; and thus would fraud and rapine, secret craft and villany, in every instance, get the better of, and with a high hand lord it over, honesty and fair dealing. People of rank and opulence would do well to lay this seriously to heart, since the security of their persons, and the quiet enjoyment of their estates, so entirely depend on a vivid affecting sense of God's superintendency having place in the world. If they would live free from the inroads of others, it is indispenfibly incumbent upon them to cultivate, cherish, and support, by means most likely to insure success, principles of sound religion, as far and as wide as their character and influence can be supposed to extend.

RELIGION is as necessary to the formation and establishment of political society, as to the preservation and tranquil state of the individual. It was long ago observed, by one most intimately acquainted with the sundry workings of the

the human heart, that he would sooner believe a city might be built without a foundation, than a government framed and upheld without the belief of a Deity. It is the full and firm persuasion of a God, and of an equal impartial retribution in a world to come, which is the very cement of society, that imparts life, spirit and vigour, to all its parts, exciting both prince and people to a hearty active discharge of their respective engagements and duties to one another.

I AM sorry to say, that certain modern practices in our own country have but too fully proved the truth of the above argument. The anarchy of the common people, on some late occasions, is an evident proof of the want of religious principle, or of the weakness of it; throwing off every kind of curb, each man sets up for his own director, and, without once thinking of the consequence, does what seemeth right in his own eyes. Supposing a reason for their complaints really to have existed, yet the licentious manner in which they spoke,

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I might say, in some cases boasted of them, and their demands for redress in a way so subversive of all legal authority and established order, bespoke a turbulent seditious spirit, and plainly shews, that they will rise from less and less causes perpetually. Such an humour, if not put under proper restraints in time, will soon break out into all the excesses of violence; and no man can be safe either in person or property. A writer in one of the public papers, which I lately took up, entirely goes along with me in opinion. I shall give his words. “ It is certain, “ that our present troubles and discon- “ tents arise from an almost total neglect “ (I might say contempt) of religion; “ an almost universal corruption of mo- “ rals, and an idle luxury, which at once “ enervates, and renders us venal; the “ man who can point out a practical me- “ thod of reforming those abuses, is not “ the favourer of any party, but the friend “ of the nation in general.” It were much to be wished, indeed, that some method could be taken for bringing men
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to a better mind, and to a course of action more consistent with the character of rationality: and, it is humbly apprehended, that no method bids so fair for doing this effectually, as the bringing them under a strong lively sense of their duty. Let them first be made good christians, and they will necessarily become good citizens, loyal and dutiful subjects. If they are once wrought upon, it makes no difference by what sort of means, or from what quarter administered, to live in the fear of God, they will certainly honour magistracy, and obey the laws. To do this being part of their religion, and bound upon them by penalties sufficient to move and turn the most refractory.

It plainly appears from above, that in the degree the sense of a Supreme Being grows less efficacious, is the restraint upon vice taken off, and a gate opens for every thing that is bad and immoral to enter in by. But such a sense could not be generated at first, nor, supposing this, could it be preserved afterwards in vigour sufficient

sufficient to become a steady principle of action, without certain times, places, and persons, being appropriated for men's public assembling, and with one voice declaring, their common dependence upon him, for whatever is requisite to their well-being and happiness. For if men did not every now and then retire from the anxious cares of this life, and openly profess their belief of God's continual presence with them, and his watchful eye over them; the desire of requesting of him what they want, and of returning thanks for what they have, would gradually decline, and in time lose all influence over them; whence the expediency of assigning certain portions of time for the observance of religious duties upon the strength of human authority only. It hath been the invariable practice of the wisest and best regulated states, ever to maintain the reverence due to those appointments, as the best preservative of public peace, and the most effectual check upon tyranny and faction; they were sensible of the mighty advantage of the doctrine of a God and Providence to society,

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and with great judgment availed themselves of it. Taking all possible care to retain a lively memory thereof by the exhibition of certain rites, and the regular returns of the appointed times of worship : having their days of humiliation and deprecation ; of prayer and supplication ; of commemoration and thanksgiving. In them it was the still voice of nature, or, more probably, the uncertain remains of some confused ancient tradition. To God's peculiar people it was proclaimed aloud by an express from heaven ; a particular charge being given by himself, and afterwards by his first great prophet, for the most punctual observance of it. The limitation of a seventh of our time to rest, and sacred offices, is an act of the great God himself, and almost coeval with the creation ; the Jews also, the better to keep in mind the great work of the creation, as also their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, consecrated the seventh day, by refraining from all kinds of labour, and devoting themselves entirely to God, upon it. The Jewish ritual was a rigorous discipline,

discipline, and the observance of it, particularly of their Sabbath, bound upon them by the most alarming sanctions. We Christians, indeed, are not obliged to keep our Sabbath with that strictness the Jews did; but, on the contrary, have received commandment to *stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free*. And the great prophet of the world has well instructed us in the nature and design of a Sabbath, directly affirming, *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*. And as we are not tied down to their rigid observation, so neither to hold our Sabbath on the same day with them, which is now, for the best reasons, changed to the first day of the week; being the day on which our Glorious Deliverer triumphed over man's last enemy, death, by putting an entire period to its power, as he actually did, in his own resurrection. But tho' in keeping the Sabbath we are not, as they were, bound by the letter, yet are we to keep it in a no less (rather let me say in a more) worthy and respectable manner;

in spirit and in truth ; with clean hearts and heavenly affections. Being no longer in bondage to a killing law, but under the free communications of grace, all our religious services should flow from a higher and more exalted principle. Since according to the advantages we enjoy, should be our progress in substantial piety, in purity of manners, and a holy unblameable conversation. The dispensation of Christ being infinitely more perfect in its kind, and every way better fitted to improve, refine, and advance man's nature, than that of Moses, it is only a justice due to its superior excellency, that the Christian Sabbath should be held in equal reverence, *at least*, with the Jewish one formerly ; to do otherwise, would be paying a very mean compliment to its Divine Author. How careful the first Christians were to meet on that day to worship a crucified Saviour, and to abound in love, charity, and all other good works, is abundantly evident from several passages in the Acts, the Epistles, and the history of those
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first and best ages of the church ; constantly bearing in mind that comfortable expression of their blessed Lord, that *where two or three are met together, in his name, there would he be in the midst of them.* Nothing but extreme sickness, or some very pressing necessity, could keep them from assembling together, and joining in prayer, in praises, and other parts of Christian worship. If modern times be measured by this standard, they fall far short of it. It is a disgrace to our holy religion to say, how shamefully the generality of Christians follow behind in this particular ! How much they want of the others faith, their zeal, their courage, their constancy, and sanctity of life ! How imperfectly do they draw after such glorious patterns ! They run the race so faintly, as if they despaired of obtaining the prize, or else thought it not worth contending for. Comparatively thin to what they might be, are our churches on the Lord's Day, and but a very small part of it is taken up in holy and devout exercises ; in calling over our thoughts,

thoughts, devices, and actions, of the preceding week ; and when we have kept to our duty, rejoicing thereat, and praying for Grace to persevere ; where we have failed in, or fallen from it, to implore strength of heaven to guard this weak side of our nature, that we may be able to withstand temptations ; in examining the state of the soul, and seeing upon what terms it stands with the father of spirits ; in settling our accounts, and endeavouring all we can to make our peace with God ; this is the proper work of a Sabbath, and the bounden duty of every Christian upon it. But how few spend it in this manner ! How backward are many in going to the house of God, and how eager to fly to some favourite diversion, as if the whole of one was nothing but a penance, and their all lay at stake at the other ; the doors of our places of fashionable entertainment are as much resorted to, and as thickly crowded, as if they were the gates of heaven, and an entrance into mansions of the most exquisite bliss and glory. Plays, cards, assemblies, &c. seem to have dissipated

sipated all thoughts of another state, and destroyed the true relish for every thing solid, intellectual and manly. What absurdity is this ! How inconsistent with the benevolent purposes of creation ! It is to sink beneath the dignity of our being, and to forfeit all title to rationality.

Does he, who gave us life, health, the free use of the faculties of the mind, and members of the body, and all things richly to enjoy, deserve nothing of us in return for such invaluable blessings ? Shall not he, whose hand hath been so often raised to defend us in danger ; so seasonably reached out to relieve us in want, be scarce once adored, invoked, or perhaps so much as remembered by us ! This is such astonishing folly, such a pitch of madness, as none who has the least share of sense could, one would think, ever arrive at. Is it possible we should forget God our Maker, who hath done those great things for us ? That covered our head in the day of battle, and in times of scarcity and distress, poured forth his benefits upon us ? Hear, O heavens, and stand

stand amazed, O earth ! Surely a favour is worth asking for, and the least we can do for the least of God's kindneſſes, is to acknowledge the receipt of them ! Which as it is the cheapeſt and eaſieſt, ſo the only tribute he expects of us. To purſue this a little further.

How can we think but that one ſo curiouſly and wonderfully made as man, muſt be formed for ſome noble purpoſe ! For what were the powers of thought given him, if not to contemplate the bleſſings he enjoys ? For what was memory, unleſs to preſerve the ſenſe of them freſh, lively and vigorous, in his mind ? Or why reaſon, if not to find out its free and bountiful Author ? Or ſpeech, which ſets him above all other parts of the viſible creation ; but that upon bended knees, and with hands expanded, he may pour out his ſoul in prayer before the footſtool of grace ; moſt earneſtly beſeeching the infinite Majeſty there to remove far off the evils he feareth, and to grant him ſuch things, as, whether he knows and nameth them or not, are moſt
neceſſary

necessary in his circumstances. And when occasions require, as they frequently will, a lip-tribute, to lift up his heart in songs of praise and thanksgiving to him. To be unmindful therefore of the God that formed us, or not to give him the glory both with our tongues and in our lives, for what we have and hold at his good pleasure, is to invert the order of things; to unman ourselves. It is to fall from our own height, and to make a chasm in the scale of beings.

I THINK I plainly perceive how we have such obligations upon us, as no other people under heaven are bound by. We seem indeed to have been marked out by the most high for favourites. Enjoying pre-eminences above most other nations in the known world. Such are — an extraordinary fertility of soil, with a happy concurrence of causes for cultivating and improving it to the utmost advantage—a greater commodiousness, in various ways, for carrying on, and reaping all the benefits of a wide and extended commerce

—a purer and more reasonable form of religious service, pointing directly to the two great ends aimed at by it, the honour of God and our own salvation—the best constituted form of civil policy any nation can boast of; with many other privileges of inferior consideration, which brought together, make a great sum, and would in other countries be esteemed mighty blessings. And what is more, we have oftener than once bravely defeated those who envied us these *special* advantages, and seemed fully bent to dispossess us of them. By many signal acts of Providence we have been happily delivered from all our enemies, at home and abroad. And if we have been thus remarkably distinguished, and in so conspicuous a manner assisted, on particular emergencies, from above, how should our breasts heave with joy, and our tongues break out into songs of praise and thanksgiving to the father of such great and unmerited mercies—cheerfully receiving his laws into our hearts, and faithfully transcribing them into practice—bearing good-will to, and
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promoting good-will amongst, all mankind. In a word, having our wills moulded into a perfect conformity with his, and ever disposed to yield obedience to it. Such and no other should have been our sentiments: those and no less our returns. But what were they? I am loth to speak them. Flagrant disrespect in a variety of instances, and the most detestable ingratitude to the King of kings. An almost total defection from his service; and an open visible contempt of his authority, in forsaking his assemblies, unhallowing his sabbaths, rejecting his ordinances, profaning his great and terrible name, denying his omniscience, and deriding his omnipotence, with the long string of other sins, that arise from those and attend upon them. And we have been as notoriously faulty in the breach of moral as of religious duties. Dissemblers, deceivers, oppressors, backbiters, tearing in pieces, and devouring one another all manner of ways, by secret machinations, and bare-faced villany. We are much the same in temper and manners with

those the Apostle describes in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, with this remarkable difference, that they were heathens, and we call ourselves Christians. They groped their way by a faint uncertain twilight, we walk in broad day, and enjoy a meridian sun. In one word, an universal dislike to holy things, and a greedy swallowing of whatever is impure and forbidden, seems to have infected all denominations of men to a degree not to be paralleled in the history of any age, where so much light to discover our duty, and so many gracious offers of assistance to perform it, have been afforded. *Shall not I visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Let us neither deny nor dissemble the matter. We have already had an earnest of what we may reasonably dread, and shall most certainly feel, if we continue any longer in such daring impieties: a loud call from heaven to turn from the evil of our ways. To dwell a minute upon this. God's several dispensations bespeak the highest propriety, and

and most unconfined benevolence in the choice and completion of them; being all intended, either to cherish and encourage our labour of love and patience in well-doing; or to check and restrain our vices and blasphemies of various kinds. *When God's judgments are abroad, the inhabitants of the earth should learn righteousness.*

IF God speaks to us in anger, we should forthwith suspect something amiss, and begin the examination. And where we have failed, either by omitting, or going against our duty, there to do all we can to repair former neglects and breaches of it. And supposing we continue *insensible* after God has given us such a sensible demonstration of his displeasure: should our stiff necks refuse to bend, and our proud hearts scorn to be humbled, can it be thought, but he will *smite us with a rod of iron, and dash us in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

AND what is here said of individuals holds equally true of publick societies. If
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once a state hears from God in displeasure, both the head and members should immediately enter into a strict scrutiny with themselves, and search diligently for the abominable thing, which, if not timely put away, will most certainly provoke God to destroy them. But since generals never affect so much as particulars, and no particulars like those in which we are immediately, or as parts of a whole, concerned, let us here stop a little, and reflect upon what has been, and may probably be our case again, if in spite of God's monitions we remain as thoughtless and dissolute as ever.

WAR is a devouring monster that scatters firebrands and arrows, desolation and terror, wherever it breaks out. Tho' it should have justice on its side, and no human means be omitted to secure success, yet it cannot be prosecuted but at the expence of much blood and treasure. We had scarce got out of one war, but we were in another. And though our late military operations were conducted with all possible

fible foresight and vigour, and such conquests have been made in every part of the globe where we engaged, as exceeded our most sanguine hopes; as have been *most probably* the envy of many of the present potentates upon earth; and will *most certainly* be the admiration of all who in after-times shall happen to hear of them; yet notwithstanding all the glory and accession of territory, we have gained by the matchless bravery of our arms, the war hath brought sore and lasting evils upon us. The national debt which, before this period, was greater than we could well bear, hath since been enormously increased, and is become in a manner insupportable. And the time of our deliverance removed I fear to an unmeasurable distance. Every necessary of life is taxed so high, as to be almost out of the reach of the poor. The war before the last came not alone, but in the progress of it an unnatural rebellion broke out, that threatened no less than an extirpation of our religion, laws and liberties. To these succeeded another chastisement, less alarming

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ing in its approaches, because not so immediately affecting some persons, but to many poor families a loss, which hath not yet been, nor perhaps ever will be, fully repaired; I mean the late mortality amongst the horned cattle. God's afflicting hand had long been upon the beasts of the field, which might, without a figure, be said to have been visited for our sakes. The scarcity of corn by a repetition of unfruitful seasons hath, as is natural to suppose it would, considerably enhanced the price of this most useful article of living. A circumstance that is severely felt by, and must greatly distress, the poor and labouring part of the community, which generally, if not always, are the majority of its members. The many and great losses sustained of late years by the heavy fall of rain and waters, may properly enough be added to the account. What are we to think of those afflictions so grievous, and yet following each other so closely! No otherwise certainly, than as scourges to lash us for our iniquities. *These events*, as Job observeth,

eth, *cometh not forth of the dust*, are not merely casual, but have a meaning. They undoubtedly can be no other than the voice of Heaven crying, *Hear ye the Rod, and him that appointed it*: the same God speaking to us, and with the same merciful intent, that spoke by his Prophet to his own once highly favoured people and city, *be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited*. But if we turn the deaf ear to those solemn warnings, or they be not strong enough to bring us upon our knees to deprecate the Divine displeasure—if they awaken us not out of our spiritual laziness, and rouse us into resolution and action, lest we also be destroyed—if we decline the task of calling our sins to remembrance, and all our past conduct to a strict account—should we refuse to descend into ourselves, and mark the prevailing biases of our hearts, in order to give them, if wrong, another direction—if with all our senses and understandings about us, we go on this year as we did the last, in our avowed profaneness and

dissoluteness of manners, without once reflecting what will be the issue, how can it be expected, but that God will increase the burthen of our present calamities, or bring new and more alarming ones upon us, that he will multiply our plagues, and cut off *man and beast together*.

IN short, wars, famines, pestilences, tempests, inundations, earthquakes, &c. are all a part of God's dreadful artillery, which he turns against a people, that have filled up the measure of their fathers iniquities, and become ripe for destruction.

I CANNOT omit setting down here an useful hint, as it is called, which I met with in the London Chronicle of Nov. 13, 1766. " There is no nation in the
" world, says this writer, which has received so many and such distinguishing
" marks of divine protection as this, either in war or in peace, and yet there
" is no nation so ungrateful, or at least
" so neglectful therein, as this.

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“ IN Holland, in Denmark, and in
 “ Sweden, they annually observe one day
 “ of publick humiliation, and publick
 “ thanksgiving; while, ever since the
 “ peace was concluded, we have observ-
 “ ed none at all.

“ I AM not surprized at the dearneſs
 “ of the neceſſaries of life, at our fight-
 “ ing and killing one another, or at the
 “ various calamities we fear and ſuffer;
 “ we forſake our generous benefactor,
 “ our God, and we muſt expect he will
 “ forſake us.”

THE Pſalmiſt hath juſtly obſerved of
 him who hath the ſeaſons in his keeping,
*how he maketh a fruitful land barren, be-
 cauſe of the wickedneſs of them that dwell
 therein.*

IT ſhould be recorded for the honour
 of Mr. Pitt's adminiſtration, that, during
 the courſe of it, we had every year one
 day of faſting and humiliation ſolemnly
 ſet apart, that with a better proſpect, and
 more hopes of being heard, we might aſk

of Heaven a blessing upon his Majesty's arms. And no sooner was any important conquest made, but we were called upon by publick authority, to offer up our joint address of thanks to the Lord of Hosts, for so visibly engaging on our side, and fighting our battles for us.

KNOWING then the number and heinousness of our provocations, and the judgments of Heaven in pursuit of us for them, let us make haste—not out of Sodom—not out of this land of universal corruption—but let us flee from our sins, lest something more terrible than what we have yet experienced overtake us. It is not the place, but our abominations in it, that make a longer stay dangerous. For those, wherever we are, will discover and mark us out for divine vengeance. *Let us circumcise ourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of our hearts, lest the Almighty's fury come forth like fire, and none be able to quench it, because of the evil of our doings.*

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To have done; the many disastrous events, which of late have happened here, call upon us to consider our ways, and amend them. From past and present experiences, therefore, as also from the prospect before us, on account of our very great depravity and corruption, it becometh us, in anguish of soul, to address ourselves with all earnestness in prayer to him who is mighty to save; *to rend our hearts and not our garments, and turn unto the Lord our God; to cry to the throne of Grace for mercy, and spare not; to put away the evil of our doings from before his eyes, ceasing to do evil, learning to do well.* And to prevail on us to turn from our wickednesses, God hath expressly told us by his Prophet, “That if he doth declare against a nation or a people, yet if that nation or people against whom he has denounced evil turn from the evil of their ways, he will repent of the evil he thought to do unto them.” What a gracious declaration is this! How full of compassion to relenting sinners! Who but would repent upon the encouragement
here

here given ! Let us humble ourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God ! Let us pray and faint not !

THE subject I have been upon, my design in taking the same into consideration, and the method I followed in doing this, do all, separately and jointly, lead me to say something of example, before I take off my pen. What a surprizing efficacy it hath in bringing over others to a likeness with it ! And here I shall take the liberty of directing my address to persons, who, from their particular departments in life, and the local relation they bear to others, claim a superiority over them.

EXAMPLE, of what sort soever it be, leads to imitation ; imitation to practice ; practice brings on habit ; and habit exerciseth a kind of despotic rule over us. Our proneness to imitate is so strong, that enough cannot be said to recommend and set off a good example ; and all that can be said is too little to prevent a bad one from scattering its infection wherever it

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appears. It has indeed the greatest sway over us when we least use our reason, and with a high hand governs us in our follies and indiscretions. Accordingly, there is one part, and that the most important of our lives, on account of the consequences it is teeming with, wherein we know little or nothing but by imitation; I mean our young and tender years, when we are daily, tho' we think not of it, preparing materials, and laying in stores, for our continuance here, and which, as we sort and manage them, become the foundation of all we shall enjoy and suffer hereafter. And if example be thus taking, and in time obtains such an absolute dominion over us, it much behoveth all persons, more especially parents and heads of families, to let their lights so shine before men, that others seeing their good works may be directed, warmed, and influenced by them. I ask permission to apply in particular to persons of weight, of property, of interest, and, which is necessarily connected therewith, power. Allow me to put you in mind, that your
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children, your servants, your friends, your companions, all, according to their several dependencies upon you, and attachments to you; and all others in proportion to the extent and influence of your character, take the fashions of their minds, and the whole turn of their actions, from you — will be just, fair conditioned, gentle, peaceable, compassionate, tenderhearted, or the contrary, in manner and degree as you are. You neither therefore can fall singly in your transgressions, nor can you rejoice alone in the fruits and happy effects of a good and well spent life. Others must and will, whether you intend they shall or no, share them with you. We are imperceptibly, but necessarily, disposed to draw after what we daily see or hear of others. It is a leading principle in our frame, and leaves not us till we leave these earthly tabernacles. 'Tis possible that it may even imply no contradiction to suppose, that it may enter the other world with us, and accompany us thro' the whole of our duration. This shews where, and from whence, reformation

mation must begin, and the course of its progress. We must begin it ourselves—set the example in our own persons—our nearest and dearest relations and dependents will soon take the impression, who, jointly with us, shall transmit it to others, those to their families and intimates, and so on as far as the name and character of each respectively reacheth. But the higher any one is raised, the further is he seen, and the more extensive effect will his example have : if good, it is a diffusive lasting blessing ; if bad, pregnant with the most destructive evils. But because from the present depravity of our nature, and the prevailing run of education as to morals, bad habits are sooner generated, and thrive and grow much faster than good ones, it will be proper to bend the whole force of the argument against the former. Quick indeed is the growth, and abundant the increase of vice, when it takes root in any place of eminence : from whence the great man disperses his impieties amongst all around him, the kingdom is stained with his defilements, and his unrighteousness runs

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down like the mighty waters. And thus might the product of flagitiousness be ascertained with great exactness in any given situation. But the limits I have prescribed myself will not admit of such a calculation. Consider this all ye thoughtless ones, especially you who are exalted above your brethren, and build your nests on high. Are you distinguished by birth — by alliances — by titles — by many rich and fertile manors! Let it not be thought, that these are privileges which set you free from every social tie, but that they draw the knot closer, and bind you to a more strict observance than what is required of persons in inferior stations. They are talents given with an intention of exacting an account of the use which shall be made of them. We are told, that where much is dispensed much will be required. The more men employ them to their Lord's honour, and to the service of their fellow-creatures, the kinder reception they will meet with, and the higher forms they shall be advanced to, in his kingdom of glory; like stars of the first magnitude, they will shine with superior lustre and strength.

strength. But if they foolishly bury them in the ground, or, which is still worse, impiously turn them to his dishonour, the forer condemnation will fall and rest upon them. Permit me to beg of you, in terms of great respect, not to let a continual round of gay delight, and enchanting pleasures, soften your minds, and quench all serious thoughts of your immortal concerns, and the character you were designed to sustain, in another world. Be not so inconsiderate, as to imagine you are at liberty to do this, because you move in a higher orb than most of your fellow-creatures. Do not forget God when God is least forgetful of you ; when he visiteth you every morning with his kindness, and lays his hand of love upon you ; when you have got to the height of your wishes, and enjoy the most elegant dainties and sweetest satisfactions of life. Be pleased to consider further, that the power you have over others is a trust committed to you from above, to be exercised for their good, temporal and eternal. A grant, which being ceded upon certain conditions may, if those are not comply'd with,

or violated, be resumed or continued at pleasure. But most assuredly, every such misapplication will draw upon the authors, either in this life or the next, an exquisitely severe punishment — and to prevail on those who *rashly* or *supinely* run on in a vicious course, to quit it for a virtuous one, and not to be disheartened from setting about such a change, as some have been, by the supposed exceeding great trouble attending it, I would recommend to them as a most certain truth, that if they will but once make a firm resolution, and begin to reform in good earnest, full half, or more, of the work is done ; that those mountains of difficulty will subside, and the prospect thenceforwards be as serene and inviting, as it was before gloomy and forbidding : the ways of religion then becoming ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace ; leading to, and terminating in, a perfect repose of mind ; in such a calm resigned temper as welcometh all events, and is entirely satisfied with, and chearful under, every condition of life. Possess your hearts once with the true fear of God, and all other fears,

fears, indeed all other counteracting passions, will fall before it, and do it obedience. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*; the principle which alone is able to make men wise unto salvation. On this, as a most firm foundation, may properly be raised all those virtues and graces, which make up and finish the man of God; a character perfect and entire, and wanting nothing. The consequences of such a conduct to others will be an unspeakable benefit. Live in the full persuasion of a Being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and let all your actions spring from, and be regulated by, a sense of his authority, and multitudes will be blessed by and through your example. Ministers of Christ may preach the word, and expatiate long and movingly upon the beauty and comeliness, but you will shew forth the power and efficacy of religion, by your virtuous and godlike conversation. They may exhort and beseech, be instant in season and out of it; but you, by the excellent frame of your minds, and a course of action conform-

conformable thereto, will convince and turn many to righteousness.

For the sake then of others, as well as for your own sakes, reflect upon your doings. Think ; be wise ; be happy.

On this, as a most important foundation, may properly be raised all those virtues and graces which make up and finish the man of God ; a character perfect and entire, and wanting nothing. The consequences of such a conduct to others will be an unfeigned testimony. Live in the full persuasion of your eyes that to behold happiness ; and let all your actions spring from it. **ST. I. N. I.** And in imitation of his authority, and multiplied will be blessed by and through your example. Ministers of Christ may preach the word, and expatiate long and movingly upon the beauty and comeliness, but you will show forth the power and efficacy of religion, by your virtues and godlike conversation. They may exhort and beseech, be instant in season and out of it ; but you, by the excellent frame of your minds, and a course of actions